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Revamped State Department May Face Cabinet Problems

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The News Foreign Analyst

Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser said publicly a few years ago that once after a State Department official had given him a message from Washington, a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) man came around and told him to pay no attention to what the State Department had said.

Nasser's allegation was never either confirmed or denied by the State Department, but if the incident didn't occur that way, it could have.

U.S. agencies with operations abroad always have tended to make their own foreign policies, irrespective of what might be the official State Department line.

OFTEN CHAOS

When it is considered that at least a dozen U.S. departments operate overseas, it is easy to comprehend that often there have been contradictions, overlappings and confusions in American foreign policy.

It is to tidy up that mess that President Johnson has named Secretary of State Rusk "director" of all U.S. overseas operations affecting two or more government departments, except military operations under area military commanders.

The State Department will have the decisive voice in de-

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termining what line the United States will take toward any particular situation in any particular country.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

If the CIA, Defense, Agriculture, Commerce or other U.S. agency objects to the State Department's decision it has the right to appeal to the White House.

The obvious effects of President Johnson's reorganization order, at least on paper, will be:

- The power of the Secretary of State will be enhanced.
- The administrative load on the White House should be lightened.
- The State Department will have to consent before any U.S. department can undertake any overseas program.
- Foreign governments should find it easier to find out what U.S. foreign policy actually is.

TIME WILL TELL

But while the Johnson reorganization program would seem to clarify administrative procedures — introduce a measure of order where there too frequently has been confusion — it remains to be seen whether the new system will work.

Government departments are notoriously jealous of their powers, and particularly resentful of interference by the State Department.

It is ironical that Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who some Washington observers figured was on his way out, has had his power increased to the point where he possesses more authority than any Secretary of State in modern times.

FULL TITLE NOW

In fact, Rusk is now truly Secretary of State in fact as well as in name.

Furthermore, the enhanced governmental power is going to a man who never sought it —

who asserted in a widely quoted article in "Foreign Affairs" that the President should make foreign policy, and the Secretary of State carry it out.

However, as a practical matter, Under Secretary of State George W. Ball is expected to head up the state machinery to coordinate all U.S. foreign policy.

If the new program is to work, there will have to be reforms inside the State Department.

State has had the reputation of being slow-moving, indecisive, overly cautious and strangled by red tape.

But Ball is a forceful man who can be counted on to use the new authority granted by the President to the fullest extent permitted.

BUNDY LEAVES

Hitherto much of the coordination work that is now being taken over by State had been performed by McGeorge Bundy, special assistant to the President for national security affairs.

But Bundy has now gone to the Ford Foundation, and it seems

certain that no one of equal stature will take his place.

Under the new program, all policy arguments will be threshed out on the State Department level, and the President's hands will be left free to deal with appeals from Department decisions and to issue final orders.

The changes move the Johnson administration away from the White House-centered operations of the Kennedy regime, and back toward the Eisenhower and Truman administrations, where the tendency was to rely primarily on the executive departments, with the President settling conflicts and differences.